

150 Useful English Collocations, Idioms, and Phrasal Verbs



profound to break ice the hot change potato

by: H. E. COLBY

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To Noel, Alex, Heather, Melissa, and Winfield with love

Preface

Welcome to *150 Useful English Collocations, Idioms, and Phrasal Verbs!*

Many professionals struggle with the three interesting word combinations in English: 1) collocations, 2) idioms, and 3) phrasal verbs. Yet, using these three types of word phrases is essential for truly dominating the English language as well as expressing yourself naturally and accurately. If your personal and/or professional success depends on confidently and fluently using English, then you need *150 Useful English Collocations, Idioms, and Phrasal Verbs!*

Are you confused about idioms, collocations, and phrasal verbs? Do you have trouble remembering which phrasal verb is separable or non-separable?

Don't worry anymore!

You are going to learn highly useful 50 English collocations, idioms, and phrasal verbs. You could read a thick heavy book on each, but I know your time is too valuable!

In *150 Useful English Collocations, Idioms, and Phrasal Verbs*, you get definitions for an idiom, a collocation, and the three different types of phrasal verbs, and definitions for each. In addition, you get quiz at the end of each chapter to test your understanding!

If you are ready to really speak English fluently and more native-like, using collocations, idioms, and phrasal verbs, you found the right book! Open *150 Useful English Collocations, Idioms, and Phrasal Verbs*, take out a clean notebook, and prepare yourself to polish your English and impress those around you!

Good luck,

H. E. Colby, author of [How to Adjust Your Business Writing to the 21st Century](#) (audio e-course)

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Introduction to Collocations

What is a collocation?

A collocation is a term used to describe common and regular word combinations in English. While these words that go together sound natural to native speakers, students of English often struggle to make sense of them. Fear no more!

You are going to learn 50 collocations to help you on English examinations, at the office, or everyday life while using English to communicate with others. Using collocations demonstrates your deep understanding of the language and culture. When you learn a language, you are immersed in that culture and you naturally learn more about its people.

Usage of collocations by native speakers is both common and predictable. In time, using this book, you too will be able to recognize collocations in texts, conversations with friends and colleagues, and while watching movies or listening to the radio. Study these 50 collocations every day and using collocations will become second nature.

How to study collocations

Learning collocations expands your English vocabulary. Not only can you communicate your ideas and thought more precisely, you can liven up your writing by adding collocations for variety. Vivid writing makes your arguments more compelling and therefore more persuasive. For example, instead of just writing disappointed, write instead bitterly disappointed to make your point finer and create an image in the mind of the reader.

Beyond this book, look for collocations in texts you read and in movies and newscasts. Write down the word combination and add it to a list. When you have a few number, create flash cards using either regular index cards or go to quizlet.com to create your own digital cards. Plus, you can also find other collocations from users there. Review the flash cards and then test yourself. Copy the sentence with the collocation or write your

own! When we write down ideas in our own notes, we tend to remember them!

There are thousands of collocations. As your English studies progress, you will no doubt learn more. Make these word combinations a part of your vocabulary and use them naturally. The following 50 collocations are a great start. Get comfortable using these collocations and you will find it easier to learn others.

Types of Collocations

There are seven (7) main types of collocations. Be aware of these patterns and you will be able to readily notice collocations when used.

(1) Adjectives and Nouns: Notice which adjectives typically go with certain nouns.

Ex: best friend, chief complain, main issue

(2) Nouns and Verbs: Notice how certain nouns and verbs are found together.

Ex: The oil industry boomed in south Texas last year. (the industry was strong).

(3) Noun + Noun: Watch for collocations in this pattern – a....of.....

Ex: Luis accepted Roland's advice with a grain of salt. (hardly accepted it at all!)

(4) Verbs and Expressions with Prepositions: Notice verbs and prepositions go together.

Ex: Myrna fell into despair when she failed her algebra test. (became sad)

(5) Adverbs and Adjectives: Some adjectives have particular adverbs that form collocations.

Ex: It was completely useless to argue with the boss over a pay raise. (worthless)

(6) Verbs and Adverbs: Some verbs have certain adverbs that form collocations.

Ex: The price of gold decreased considerably with a new discovery in Zambia. (the price fell a lot)

(7) Short Phrases with a Specific Word Order: Be aware of these types of combinations.

Ex: Jazmine was head and shoulders above the rest of the class with good grades.

50 Collocations

1. **to achieve success** – to obtain the desired result, wealth, fame, etc.
Ex: Lori achieved success by graduating from Stanford with honors.
2. **bitterly disappointed** – very upset.
Ex: Roth was bitterly disappointed when he was not accepted at Yale.
3. **booming economy** – a strong economy with a lot of prosperity.
Ex: Tax receipts sharply grew with the booming economy.
4. **brand awareness** – extent to which a company's brand is known.
Ex: Albemare Fish Company concentrated its marketing on brand awareness.
5. **break a leg** – expression of “good luck.”
Ex: Before Setti gave her speech, her boss told her to “break a leg.”
6. **to break a promise** – to not do what you said you would do.
Ex: Nina broke a promise to take her baby sister skating on Saturday.
7. **to break a record** – to destroy a previously set record by setting a new one.
Ex: Ahmed broke the record for time to run the 100 meter dash.
8. **to break someone's heart** – to cause great emotional pain and suffering.
Ex: Lola broke Ian's heart when she went to the dance with Jared instead.
9. **to break the ice** – to make unfamiliar people feel relaxed and at ease.
Ex: Our boss always breaks the ice by talking to clients about his children.
10. **to break the law** – to commit an offense or fail to follow the law.
Ex: The accountant broke the law by transferring company funds into his own bank account.
11. **to bring up the subject** – to introduce a topic in a conversation or meeting.

Ex: Josh brought up the subject of leaving work early on Friday at the morning meeting.

12. **crucial role** – an important part of something.

Ex: A private detective played a crucial role in solving the mystery of the missing bank funds.

13. **to do exercises** – to perform physical activity

Ex: You are encouraged to do exercises in order to stay healthy.

14. **to do your homework** – to perform tasks or assignments.

Ex: Alberto did his homework before going to basketball practice.

15. **to draw a conclusion** – to gain evidence and make a final judgment.

Ex: The CEO was forced to draw a conclusion that Sarah was not ready for the promotion.

16. **first-hand knowledge** – information from the original source.

Ex: The bank manager had first-hand knowledge of the embezzlement case.

17. **to foot the bill** – to pay for any expenses.

Ex: Lars had to foot the bill for his car accident with the delivery truck.

18. **to form/develop a friendship** – to make or be friends with someone.

Ex: Kayla and Mike developed a friendship working so late at night together.

19. **to gain control** – to exercise direct authority over something.

Ex: The army gained control of the bridge by surprising the enemy.

20. **to get along** – to be or remain on friendly terms.

Ex: Lorenzo and Tara seem to get along well together despite their differences.

21. **to get away** – to escape or go away from somewhere.

Ex: Rosa got away from the shark by swimming quickly to shore.

22. **to get mad** – to become irritated or upset.

Ex: Raul's girlfriend got mad when he canceled their weekend trip to the beach.

23. **to get permission** – to receive authorization to do something

Ex: Alan got permission to leave early on Friday.

24. **to get the message** – to clearly understand someone's intentions.

Ex: When the boss denied Reggie's request for a raise, he got the message.

25. **to go blind** – to not be able to see any longer.

Ex: Joana went blind after the car wreck on the freeway.

26. **gradual increase** – becoming larger or greater at a regular pace

Ex: The gradual increase in taxes slowly decreased profits of the company.

27. **harsh environment** – difficult, cruel, or unpleasant situation or circumstance.

Ex: Eddie was in a harsh environment when he first entered the military.

28. **to have difficulty** – to encounter trouble or an awkward task.

Ex: Hannah had difficulty trying to live after being fired from her job.

29. **to have an argument** – to experience a disagreement with someone.

Ex: The store manager had an argument with an Tamara after she arrived late to work.

30. **to have a feeling** – to know something

Ex: Jess had a feeling her mom was sick so she took her to the doctor.

31. **to have sympathy** – to express pity or sorrow for someone.

Ex: Lorna had sympathy for Lance when he broke his left foot by taking him to the park every day.

32. **to head a team** – to lead a group of people.

Ex: Max was chosen to head a team to investigate the finances of the company.

33. **highly controversial** – causing extreme amount of argument or disputes.

Ex: The CEO's sudden decision fire her very polite secretary was highly controversial.

34. **to hold a conversation** – to talk with someone.

Ex: Janie could not hold a conversation with her neighbor because her children were playing in the street.

35. **ideas flow** – originate from.

Ex: Seth's ideas flow from his experience as a computer engineer and electrician.

36. **imposing building** – a large oversized tall structure.

Ex: The headquarters of the Nimbleton Corporation is that imposing building on Main Street.

37. **interest rate** – the percentage of a sum of money for its use.

Ex: The astronomical interest rate discouraged buying a house last year.

38. **inverse relationship** – a relationship opposite in nature or effect

Ex: There was an inverse relationship between the interest rate and number of houses bought: the higher the rate, the lower the number of houses bought.

39. **to judge someone harshly** – to criticize someone in a harmful or unpleasant way.

Ex: Maria's boss judged her harshly after she failed to sell more cars than last month.

40. **to lose patience** – to not be able to remain tolerant or calm.

Ex: Mikhail lost patience with John's sloppy work so he fired him!

41. **to make a decision** – to decide on one action over another.

Ex: Bert made a decision to save money so he stopped buying a latte on Monday morning.

42. **to make a mistake** – to commit an error or misinterpret something.

Ex: Lars made a mistake when he told Kyle to deliver the goods at the wrong address.

43. **to make an effort** – to try to do something.

Ex: Kayla and Mike made an effort to keep their romance a secret.

44. **to make friends** – to establish a relationship with someone.

Ex: Chad and Larissa quickly made friends at the new school.

45. **marked improvement** – a noticeable change in quality or condition.

Ex: Felipe showed a marked improvement in his work after his boss reprimanded him.

46. **panoramic view** – a situation or topic as if viewed from a large distance or altitude.

Ex: Lyla was astounded by the panoramic view of Manhattan from her new office.

47. **profound change** – a big difference in quality or condition.

Ex: The CEO announced profound changes like no more free lunches for employees in order to make the company profitable again.

48. **relaxed atmosphere** – a calm peaceful situation

Ex: Lola went to the beach in order to make her decision in a relaxed atmosphere.

49. **to revive the economy** – to restore or bring back to vitality the economy.

Ex: The president lowered taxes on businesses in an attempt to revive the economy.

50. **sprawling city** – a city developing in an uncontrolled way.

Ex: Sao Paulo, Brazil, is a sprawling city.

Collocations Exercise

Directions: Choose the correct word to make the right combination to correctly complete the sentence.

1. Lonnie **achieved/broke** a promise to take Sally to the movies on Thursday.

2. A **crucial/booming** economy increased jobs for the people of Smalltown.

3. The company got **permission/difficulty** to build a bridge across the river.

4. Jeffrey **had/made** a mistake when he tried to run away from the policemen.

5. Studying for her MBA made a **marked/profound** change in Conchita's career.

6. The small shop owner **got/had** the message when someone burned down his house when he did not pay the ransom.

7. The **inverse/first-hand** relationship between the low interest rate and high number of houses sold helped the local real estate market.

8. Jeb **made/lost** patience with the local mayor and decided to vote against him in the next election.

9. The new business focused on **brand/imposing** awareness to tell the public about its products.

10. The **crucial/gradual** increase in energy costs hurt business in the small valley.

Introduction to Idioms

What is an idiom?

An idiom is a term for a fixed group of words established by usage as having a meaning not understandable from those of the individual words. You may know each word, but only together do the words make sense.

Idioms are often used in spoken English in a variety of situations from lunchtime gatherings with friends to formal business meetings.

These set phrases are also often used in newspaper writing. Headline writers want attention-grabbing copy to attract readers.

How to study idioms

Idioms are not only colorful and fun to learn. They are important for students of English who interact a lot with native speakers. In order to follow a conversation, or understand a news report, or understand marketing messages, idioms play a very important role. Idioms help students learn English better.

Language is culture. Idioms are deeply embedded in the culture of native English speakers. Learning idioms helps you understand the culture of its speakers!

50 Idioms

1. **a change of heart** – a change in the way one feels about something.

Ex: Lori had a change of heart and cancelled her date with Rodrigo.

2. **a close call** – an accident or incident that almost happens but does not happen.

Ex: Samantha had a close call when the child ran into the street before her car.

3. **a hot potato** – a difficult and troubling issue.

Ex: The whaling issue is a hot potato between Japan and its neighbors.

4. **a piece of cake** – something that is easy to accomplish or do.

Ex: It was a piece of cake for Martin to score an A on his chemistry exam.

5. **a slap on the wrist** – a mild punishment

Ex: The banker only got a slap on the wrist for embezzling a million dollars.

6. **actions speak louder than words** – It is better to do something than just talk about it.

Ex: Roberto promises to help with the car wash on Saturday, but actions speak louder than words.

7. **to add insult to injury** – to make a situation worse.

Ex: Not only did the banker get a slap on the wrist, add insult to injury, he is going to sue the bank for defamation!

8. **best of both worlds** – receive benefits of two different things at the same time.

Ex: Jared has the best of both worlds – a mom to cook his meals and a sister to iron his clothes!

9. **to bite off more than you can chew** – to try to do more than you can do.

Ex: Lola bit off more than she could chew when she got a second job to pay expenses.

10. **blue moon** – a rare occurrence.

Ex: Is there a blue moon? Sara is actually cleaning up the house!

11. break a leg – good luck

Ex: Josh told Kayla to break a leg before she left for the job interview.

12. to burn your bridges – to act or communicate unpleasantly or nastily ensuring you will never be welcome again.

Ex: Biff burned his bridges at work by insulting his boss and coworkers before he quit.

13. to call someone's bluff – to challenge someone to prove what they say is truthful

Ex: The police called the bluff of the bank robbers and stormed the building, but found no hostages.

14. cash cow – a company's most profitable product.

Ex: The 2-liter bottle of grape soda is the cash cow for K and B Beverages.

15. clear the air – to resolve a dispute or argument.

Ex: Alberto cleared the air with his boss and kept his job.

16. cold shoulder – a nasty attitude of rejection.

Ex: Jessica gave her boyfriend the cold shoulder after she saw him kiss another girl.

17. to cost an arm and leg – to pay a lot of money.

Ex: Lars had bought a new sail boat, but it cost him an arm and a leg.

18. to be dead to the world – to be sleeping deeply.

Ex: Kayla was dead to the world after the long flight from London.

19. to drive someone up the wall – to irritate or annoy someone greatly.

Ex: Hannah's smoking drives her mother up the wall.

20. eager beaver – a person who is anxious to work hard and do extra work.

Ex: Lorenzo is an eager beaver. She arrives early at the office and goes home late.

21. to feel under the weather – to be sick.

Ex: Rosa did not go to work today. She feels under the weather.

22. to get something off your chest – to express exactly what you are thinking.

Ex: Raul got the F off his chest by screaming down his dormitory hallway.

23. to get the ball rolling – to initiate action

Ex: Alan got the ball rolling on his project by meeting with key players after work.

24. to get to the bottom of – to discover the cause of something.

Ex: The state prosecutor vowed to get to the bottom of the illegal drug trade in Belville.

25. to go ape – to get very excited or emotional.

Ex: Joana went ape after her numbers matched the lottery drawing!

26. to go behind someone's back – to betray, to do something that is kept a secret from someone affected by it.

Ex: Marsha went behind Larry's back and told his girlfriend that he kissed another girl.

27. goof off – to waste time, to not work, to do nothing productive.

Ex: Eddie goofs off by playing video games after classes.

28. to hear it on the grapevine – to discover information through rumors, gossip, etc.

Ex: Hannah heard through the grapevine that Professor Davis lost her job.

29. to hit the books – to study, usually in an intense manner.

Ex: Lolly and Dolly hit the books one night before their English final exam.

30. to hit the nail on the head – to be exactly right about something or what is causing something

Ex: Jess hit the head on the head when she said Roberta did not study enough and thus failed her test.

31. to keep your cool – to remain calm despite a difficult situation.

Ex: Lorna has kept her cool during the debate despite sharp words from the other side.

32. to kill two birds with one stone – to solve two problems with one action.

Ex: Max was able to kill two birds with one stone during his trip to Madrid: practice his Spanish and see his friend, Marisela.

33. to leave someone out in the cold – to exclude.

Ex: Marty felt left out in the cold at work after his ugly fight in the cafeteria.

34. to let the cat out of the bag – to tell a secret.

Ex: Ivan let the cat out of the bag so Melissa knew she won a promotion to vice president before the boss' announcement.

35. **like clockwork**— precisely.

Ex: Seth always show up to work like clockwork at 7 a.m.

36. **mumbo jumbo** – nonsense or meaningless speech.

Ex: Burt dismissed the salesman from the office because of his non-stop mumbo jumbo.

37. **my two cents** – my opinion.

Ex: You should go to Australia and have a good time. Well, that's my two cents.

38. **nest egg** – money saved for the future

Ex: Yali created a large nest egg after working 25 years for Hamilton State Bank.

39. **to scrape the bottom of the barrel** – to choose the worse of something, least attractive option.

Ex: Maria scraped the bottom of the barrel when she chose Chet to take her to the party.

40. **to scratch someone's back** – to do a favor for someone who does a favor for you.

Ex: It's all politics who wins the contest: you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours!

41. **to see eye to eye** –when people agree with each other.

Ex: Bert and Shelly just cannot seem to see eye to eye on how to discipline their bratty child.

42. **to sit on the fence** – to be unable to make a decision.

Ex: The mayor is sitting on the fence on whether to build a park by the river.

43. **squeaky clean** – perfectly clean.

Ex: The new police chief is squeaky clean according to his mother.

44. **to take what someone says with a grain of salt** – to barely believe what a person tells you.

Ex: Betty took with a grain of salt what Gina said about studying for her French exam.

45. **the last straw** – the final irritation or disappointment which exhausts your patience.

Ex: For Felipe, his fight with the boss was the last straw: he is quitting his job!

46. **to turn a blind eye** – to refuse to acknowledge something that is real or legitimate.

Ex: The judge turned a blind eye to the suspect's violent past and released him from prison.

47. to turn back the clock – to try to return to the past.

Ex: The president vowed to stop the proposal to turn back the clock on women's rights.

48. up the creek without a paddle – in a dire situation without any hope of escaping it.

Ex: When Lars got a flat in his car's left tire, he realized he did not have a spare tire so he was up the creek without a paddle.

49. when pigs fly – something that will never occur.

Ex: Jenna says she wants to win the lottery. When pigs fly!

50. You can't judge a book by its cover. – decisions should not be made by appearance.

Ex: Serena rejected a date with Eddie. As they say, you can't judge a book by its cover.

Idiom Exercise

Directions: Choose the correct word to make the right combination to correctly complete the sentence.

1. Marcos has a **last straw/squeaky clean** record with no arrests or convictions.

2. The governor **turns back the clock/scratches the back** of political donors after election day.

3. Bobby **goofed off/went ape** after he learned his girlfriend kissed another guy.

4. Jeffrey talks **eager beaver/mumbo jumbo** when the professor asks him a question.

5. Seiko has a **nest egg/last straw** for retirement after her 30-year career at the Burger Shack.

6. Tasha had a **change of heart/piece of cake** about traveling to Paris after she lost her job.

7. Cutting educational funding for children is a **close call/hot potato** for politicians during an election year.

8. Luis cost **an arm and a leg/burned bridges** when he punched his supervisor before quitting his job at the factory.

9. Smart phones are **a cold shoulder/cash cows** for many technology firms at the moment.

10. It must be **a blue moon/my two cents** because Teddy never studies Spanish before an exam.

Introduction to Phrasal Verbs

What is a phrasal verb?

A phrasal verb or multi-part verb are verbs that combine with one or two particles (preposition and/or adverb) to create a verb with different meanings than the original one.

While not the ideal, students of English want to sound more like native speakers.

Using phrasal verbs accurately will make you sound more like a native speaker. Above all, you will speak and write English more naturally, a better goal.

Types of Phrasal Verbs

There are four types of phrasal verbs:

(a) intransitive and non-separable. Remember intransitive simply means that a verb does not take an object.

Ex: The bank robbers got away from the police. Note: The two-parts of the phrasal verb “got away” are together. Not: The bank robbers got from the police away. It is impossible to separate the two parts.

(b) transitive and separable. Remember transitive means that a verb does take an object. Notice that in the following example you have a choice: using the phrasal verb parts together or apart.

Ex: Raul picked the baby up. OR Raul picked up the baby. “Baby” answers WHAT Raul picked up, and thus is the object of the sentence. Note: The word order does not matter with transitive and separable phrasal verbs. Thus the two parts “pick” and “up” can be apart or together in the sentence.

(c) transitive and non-separable. The verb and its article cannot be apart from its noun or pronoun object. This type of phrasal is followed by someone or something

Ex: I don’t have time to look for my keys. Note: The two-parts of the phrasal verb “look for” are together. Not: I don’t have time to look my key for. It does not make any sense!

(d) transitive and two non-separable parts. The two particles cannot be separated from the main verb. Ex: The king looks down on his subjects.

Note: The three parts of the phrasal verb “look down on” are together and followed by people, in this case, subjects. Not: The king looks down his subjects on. Not: The king looks his subjects down on.

How to study phrasal verbs

Only by studying, memorizing, reading English texts, listening to audio and video, and using phrasal verbs in speech and written work can you master them. Unfortunately, there is no set of rules to help you. As you already probably know, even the so-called rules in English have exceptions.

When you learn a new phrasal verb, identify its type from the four options above. Then write sample sentences. If you need help, you can use this text or use the Internet to find examples.

As your English skills improve, use phrasal verbs in increasing frequency in your conversations and writings. It is virtually impossible to use English and not use phrasal verbs!

So, let's get started. Use these 50 helpful phrasal verbs to jump start your effort to conquer phrasal verbs once and for all! We give you the definition of the phrasal verb and the type of phrasal verb in order to help you learn them faster.

50 Phrasal Verbs

1. **aim at** – (transitive and separable or inseparable) – to point or direct a firearm at something or to try or to strive.

Ex: Lori aimed at mastering phrasal verbs before her IELTS exam. The bank robber aimed the gun at the hostage.

2. **to bring (something) about** – (transitive and inseparable) – to achieve or to accomplish.

Ex: Land reform brought about economic prosperity for farmers across the country.

3. **to bring (something) back** – (transitive and separable or inseparable) – to return from somewhere with something.

Ex: Please bring a loaf of bread back from the market. Please bring back a loaf of bread from the market.

4. **to break down** – to stop working – (intransitive and inseparable)

Ex: Carla's car broke down while she was traveling to the beach.

5. **to bring in** – to earn money – (transitive and separable)

Ex: The Italian restaurant brings in million dollars a year because of the great food.

6. **to bring up something** – (transitive and inseparable).

Ex: Rolf brought up the fact that Sherman is not a good chess player.

7. **to carry on** – to behave wildly – (intransitive and inseparable).

Ex: Reggie has been carrying on all day about losing the tennis match last night.

8. **to carry out something** – to perform or complete an activity – (transitive and inseparable).

Ex: The investigator carried out an inspection and found thirty secret bank accounts!

9. **to come back** – to return – (intransitive and inseparable)

Ex: Lola came back home with a car full of groceries!

10. **to come down** – to go to a lower position or drop – (intransitive and inseparable)

Ex: House prices have come down after interest rates dropped.

11. **to come in for something** – to receive (criticism or blame) – (transitive and inseparable)

Ex: Josh told Kayla she was coming in for a tough talk from her boss after that comment..

12. **to come on** – to start to develop gradually like an illness – (intransitive and inseparable).

Ex: Biff felt a big headache coming on after drinking the entire bottle of rum.

13. **to come out** – to be known or to come public – (intransitive and inseparable).

Ex: Scary facts came out about the suspect who robbed Hamilton State Bank.

14. **to come up** – to be talked about in a conversation – (intransitive and inseparable).

Ex: The high price of gold came up at the investors conference.

15. **to find out** – to get knowledge, usually about dishonest activities or practices.

Ex: Alberto found out his boss was stealing money from the company.

16. **to get along with** (someone) – to have a good relationship (with someone) – (intransitive and inseparable).

Ex: Jessica could not get along with her boyfriend after she saw him kiss another girl.

17. **to get out of something** – to avoid doing something that you don't want to do – (intransitive and inseparable).

Ex: Lars got out of taking the trash when he convinced his sister to do it.

18. **to get (someone) up** – to cause someone to rise from the bed – (transitive and separable).

Ex: Kayla finally got Giraldo up before he missed the bus to work.

19. **to give up (something)** – to stop doing or to stop having something – (transitive and separable).

Ex: Hannah gave up smoking after her heart attack.

20. **to go back on (something)** – to fail to keep a promise – (transitive and inseparable).

Ex: Lorenzo went back on his promise to help Hannah with her algebra homework.

21. **to go off** – to explode or make a loud noise – (intransitive and inseparable).

Ex: A bomb went off in the Paris metro.

22. **to go with (something)** – to seem natural or attractive in combination with something – (transitive and inseparable).

Ex: Rosa's red scarf does not go with her green dress.

23. **to hand in** – to submit – (transitive and separable)

Ex: Alan handed in his project late to the boss and was reprimanded.

24. **to hold up** – to delay – (transitive and separable).

Ex: The judge held his decision up till more evidence was made presented.

25. **to hold up (2)** – to rob – (transitive and separable).

Ex: Three thin thieves just held Hamilton National Bank up!

26. **to leave out** – to omit – (transitive and separable)

Ex: In her job interview, Marsha left the fact out that she was fired from her last job.

27. **to never look back** – to become increasingly successful – (intransitive and inseparable).

Ex: Eddie never looked back after scoring a number one song on the chart last year.

28. **to look down on** – to feel something or someone is not worthy of respect or disdain – (transitive and inseparable).

Ex: Hannah looks down on the peasant workers on the rice plantation.

29. **to look forward to** – to anticipate - (intransitive and inseparable).

We look forward to meeting the new CEO of the company at the party.

30. **to look into** – to investigate – (transitive and inseparable).

Ex: The private investigator is looking into the suspicious fire at the saloon.

31. **to look over** – to examine or inspect something quickly and carelessly

Ex: The policewoman looked over the immigrant's documents and waived him through the checkpoint.

32. **to look up** – to redo – (transitive and inseparable).

Ex: Max looked up the date of the battle for his history paper.

33. **to make over** – to redo or renovate – (transitive and inseparable).

Ex: The decorators made over the bedroom in a romantic French style.

34. **to make up (1)** – to construct or compose; to invent a falsehood; to take (a course of exam) again because of an absence or failure – (transitive and inseparable).

Ex: Fifty states and Puerto Rico make up the United States. Jenny made up a story to tell her teacher why she did not do his homework. Ronald will make up his French exam on Saturday.

35. **to make up (2)** – to compensate for; to end a dispute – (intransitive and inseparable).

Ex: Ivan made up for cancelling his date with Melissa by taking her to a fancy restaurant last night. Ivan and Melissa made up after he cancelled their date.

36. **to pick on** – to tease or bully (transitive and inseparable).

Ex: Seth likes to pick on little girls.

37. **to pick up** – to take something by hand; to collect or gather; to acquire knowledge by learning – (transitive and inseparable).

Ex: You can pick up your last paycheck next Friday. Pick up your assignments before leaving class today. Rolfo picked up Spanish quickly in Madrid.

38. **to pull through** – to recuperate from tough situation – (intransitive and inseparable).

Ex: Yali pulled through two hours of back surgery.

39. **to put off** – to postpone, delay doing something – (transitive and inseparable).

Ex: Maria put off seeing the dentist until the pain was unbearable.

40. **to put up with** – to tolerate – (transitive and inseparable).

Ex: Who can put up with such lying and deception from a friend?

41. **to set off (1)** – to cause to occur; to make something explode; to make something operate, usually by accident – (transitive and inseparable). – (transitive and inseparable).

Ex: Bert set off a dispute with the teacher when he refused her instructions. The terrorist set off the bomb by remote control using a cellphone. The janitor set off the fire alarm while mopping the floor.

42. **to set off (2)** – to leave on a trip or journey – (intransitive and inseparable).

Ex: Three hikers set off to climb Mont Blanc in France despite the bad conditions.

43. **to set out (1)** – to present, arrange or describe (something) – (transitive and inseparable).

Ex: The new police chief set out a plan to lower the crime rate.

44. **to set out (2)** – to leave on a trip – (intransitive and inseparable).

Ex: Betty and Jose set out for Jamaica on his modern yacht.

45. **to set up** – to establish a business, institution, or group – (transitive and in/separable).

Ex: Arthur set a new business up in downtown Millville.

46. **to take back** – to receive or accept something that you previously sold, offered, or gave away; to retract or withdraw a comment by admitting it was wrong – (transitive and separable).

Ex: The department store took back Martha's coat even without a receipt.

Lana took back

47. **to take off (1)** – to leave the ground and fly; to leave a place for another – (intransitive and inseparable).

Ex: The Cessna jet took off from the remote airport for Hawaii.

48. **to take off (2)** – to remove a piece of clothing – (transitive and inseparable).

Ex: Brent took off his T-shirt before jumping into the swimming pool.

49. **to take on something/someone** – to fight or compete against something/someone – (transitive and inseparable).

Ex: Jenna took on Janet in a debate over the minimum wage.

50. **to take out** – to arrange to get something from a company, bank, etc.

Ex: Serena took out a loan from Hamilton National Bank to study at the university.

Phrasal Verb Exercise

Directions: Choose the correct phrasal verb combination by selecting the word or words from Set I and Set II to complete the sentences below. Make any changes to phrasal verbs to fit the verb tense of the sentence.

Set I: take aim carry put pick hand come find look set

Set II: back at in out up off with into on

1. Marcos _____ his mean comments about Jane's green dress.

2. The governor _____ helping poor children to attend elementary school.

3. Investigators _____ an audit of the bank to find the embezzler.

4. People gathered in the central park to _____ fireworks to celebrate Independence Day.
5. Much money has been invested to _____ the cure for cancer.
6. Tasha _____ her English essay late and received an F.
7. Why don't you _____ someone your own size you big bully!
8. Luisa, you don't have to _____ the harassment from your boss. Sue him!
9. Investing in that failing technology company _____ in my conversation with Rich today.
10. Police _____ the mysterious disappearance of Texas oil millionaire, Drake Saunders.

SOLUTIONS TO EXERCISES

COLLOCATIONS

1. broke a promise
2. booming economy
3. got permission
4. made a mistake
5. profound change
6. got the message
7. inverse relationship
8. lost patience
9. brand awareness
10. gradual increase

IDIOMS

1. squeaky clean
2. scratches the back
3. went ape
4. mumbo jumbo
5. nest egg
6. change of heart
7. hot potato
8. burned bridges
9. cash cows
10. blue moon

PHRASAL VERBS

1. took back
2. aimed at
3. are carrying out, carried out
4. set off
5. find out
6. handed in
7. pick on

8. put up with
9. came up
10. are looking into, looked into

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H. E. Colby is a seasoned Business English professor helping students reach their fullest potential since 2007.